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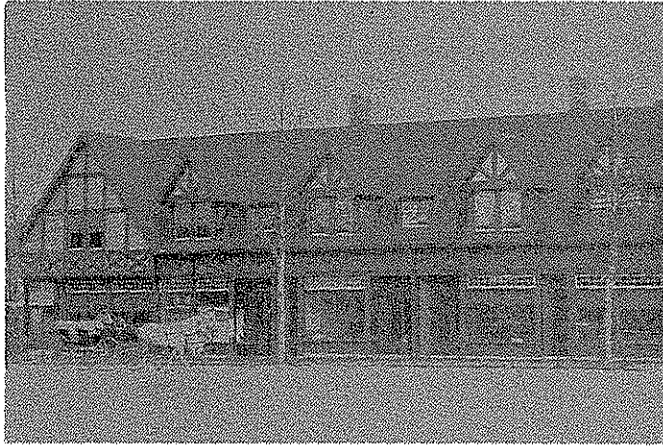
## CHAPTER 4: GENERAL PLAN AND CHARACTER OF BILTMORE VILLAGE

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THE COMMERCIAL VILLAGE CORE	19
THE COTTAGE AREAS	19
THE MIXED-USE AREAS	20
MAJOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL AREAS	21
INDIVIDUAL LANDMARKS	22
EARLY DEED RESTRICTIONS	22

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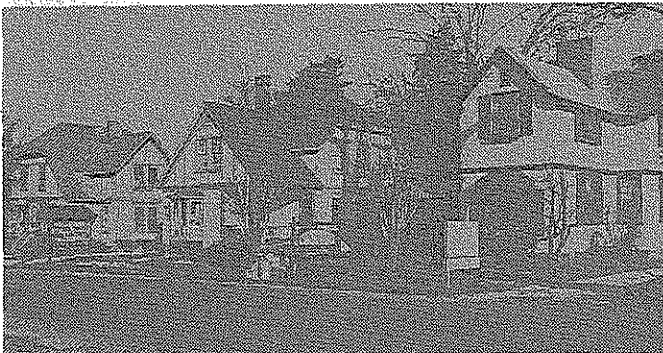
## CHAPTER 4: THE GENERAL PLAN AND CHARACTER OF BILTMORE VILLAGE



Mixed use buildings were a part of the original Village concept. This block, designed by Smith, combined retail functions and apartments. It stood at the east side of the Plaza and Brook Street.



The Commercial Area today, along Short Street.



The Cottage Area today, along All Soul's Crescent.

Functionally, the Village was planned in four informal land use categories, which were reflected in the architecture. The scale of buildings varied among the sub-areas, yet at the same time a clearly restricted architectural vocabulary was used to establish uniformity of character throughout.

### THE COMMERCIAL VILLAGE CORE

The first sub-area, the Village Core, was centered around the Plaza, and consisted of commercial buildings that were built at the sidewalk edge. A "mixed-use" structure (designed by Smith) was included at the corner of the Plaza and Brook Street that incorporated businesses on the ground level and residential functions above. This building set a model for commercial buildings that other designers continued into the 1930's, in which the first floor is predominantly glass storefront, oriented to pedestrians, and the upper floor is more solid in appearance, with small window openings. Although this mixed-use building was demolished, this commercial character still pervades the core area.

Commercial buildings are distinguished by their mix of brick, stone, and pebbledash stucco. Many have flat parapets for roof lines. Others have large gabled roofs, with larger dormers. Sidewalks are uninterrupted by curb cuts or driveways, except at alley entrances. Service areas are located in the rear.

### THE COTTAGE AREAS

Extensive portions of the Village were planned to have a half-timbered cottage appearance. The majority of the buildings were indeed residences, but many also housed commercial and institutional functions. Visually, however, they all worked to convey the sense of an European village that was the concept for the town. In general, the longer, uninterrupted streets were lined with cottages. Cottages that appeared genuinely residential were planned along both the east and west arms of All Souls Crescent. A central swath of residential buildings, although generally larger in scale, was located along Angle Street.

On the fringes of the Village Core, commercial uses were housed in buildings designed in the "cottage" manner rather than commercial blocks. This was perhaps a transitional device planned by Olmsted.

Today, many of these houses in these areas have been demolished, but clusters of cottages along the east side of All Soul's Crescent survive and still convey the sense of character of the original plan. Buildings are uniformly set back from the sidewalk. Each faces the street, and the major entrance is identified with a porch. The rhythm of porches along the block remains a strong unifying element. Sloping roofs dominate the scene, with accents of dormers and gables creating visual interest. Pebbledash stucco prevails as the primary building material, while ornament and trim are crafted from flat wood members.

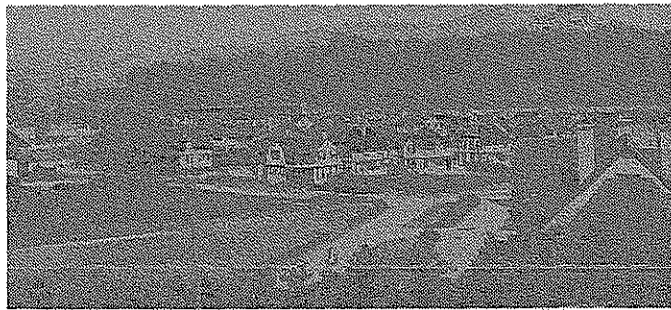
Along the west side of All Soul's Crescent, however, the scene has radically shifted. Today, few examples are visible of the cottage theme. Although total build-out was never completed in this area, many structures that contributed to the village character have been removed, to be replaced with auto-oriented commercial buildings. The distinctive rhythm of street trees and pattern of roof forms is missing. For this reason, the primary goal for this area is to re-establish a sense of the historic character, while accommodating new uses.

## THE MIXED-USE AREAS

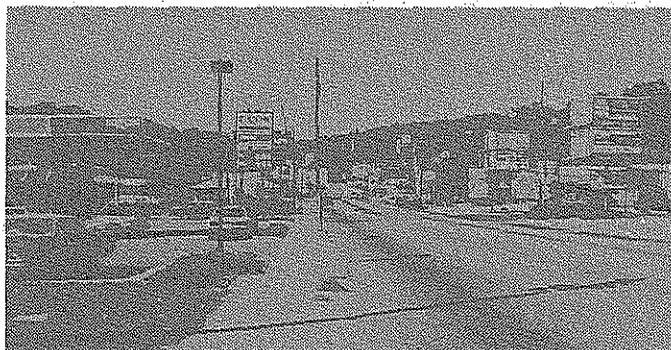
Two districts appear to have been planned as locations for buildings that combined a mix of activities, including residential, commercial and institutional functions. One such area was located along Lodge Street from the Depot west through the intersection of Hendersonville (Biltmore) Road. The second area flanked the Church on the east (at Biltmore Road), and on the west (at Swan Street). Buildings in these areas were designed in the cottage style, but often were larger than the normal cottages, or they employed more distinctive forms and details. Nonetheless, these buildings related to their context in terms of yard setbacks and orientation to the street.

These areas have experienced the greatest change in recent years. Virtually all early structures have been removed and "strip commercial" development has occurred. In recent years gas stations, fast food operations, and other auto-oriented services have dominated the scene. Most of the more recent buildings are set back from the street.

Parking dominates the visual field. Most sites have extensive parking lots, and these are generally located in front of the building where originally lawns were planned. Most signs are free-standing, and mounted on poles. These are usually located at the edge of the site adjacent to the sidewalk. Many service areas, loading bays, utility boxes and waste receptacles, are exposed to view. This is a change from the historic plan, in which service areas were located in rear (private) yards and screened with fences.



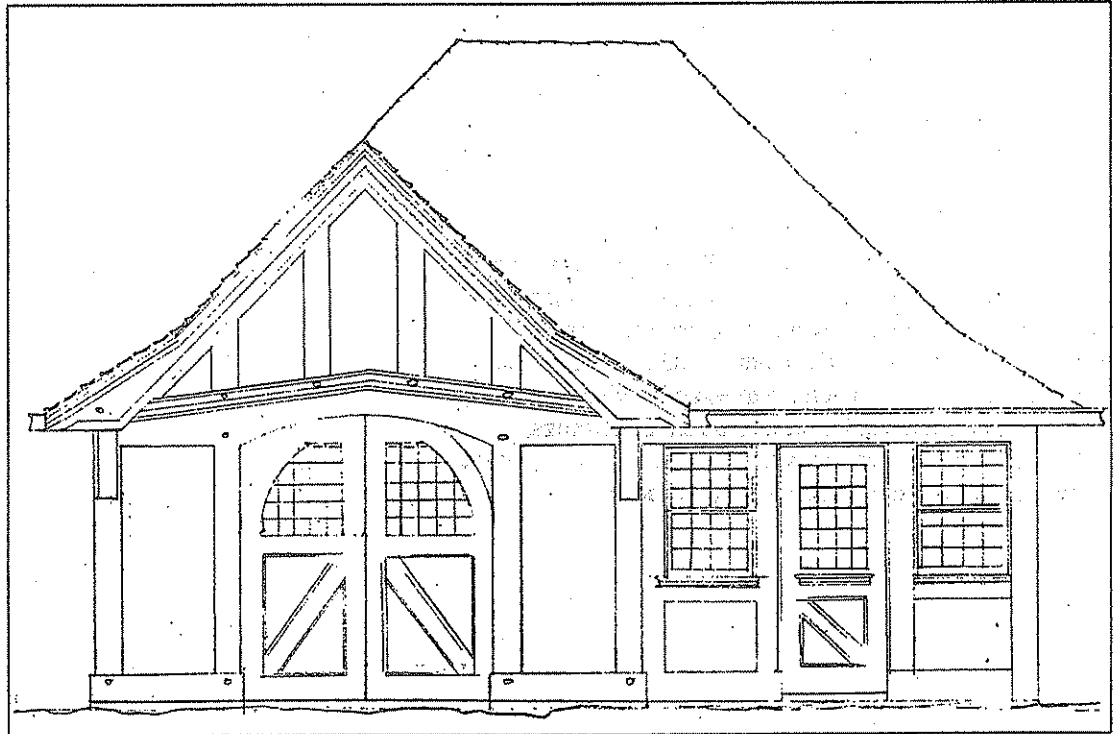
Looking north over the hospital, the variety of sloping roofs dominated this early view of the Village. Note the use of hedges to define open spaces and screen rear yards.



Parking areas and large signs along Hendersonville Road dominate the scene and confuse the interpretation of this corridor through the historic district.

## MAJOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL AREAS

Key sites in the Village were set aside for the Depot, the Church and Hospital as major public institutions. Although other public service buildings were also planned for the Village, such as a Boy's Club and a school, they were more integrated into the overall plan. Other public facilities now gone included a tennis court and "cricket ground." The Depot and Church stood at the most prominent sites in the Village, while the hospital was set to the edge across the Village Brook, in a quieter, more recuperative atmosphere.



This sketch, dated 1902, was for a fire station, one of the many institutional buildings planned for the Village. (The map on page 7 shows a fire station located in Block E).

## INDIVIDUAL LANDMARKS

Although many structures have historic significance in Biltmore Village some stand out as landmarks because of their design and location. These buildings provide visual accents to the Village and serve as reference points. They are typically located in prominent sites, and most currently serve or have served public functions. The landmark buildings are subject to special review. Preservation in the original condition or restoration to its period of significance is the primary goal for these buildings. The most prominent landmarks are:

1. All Soul's Church
2. (Clarence Barker Memorial) Hospital
3. The Railroad Depot
4. The Biltmore Estate Office Building
5. Biltmore Oteen Bank Building

## EARLY DEED RESTRICTIONS

As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Vanderbilt recognized the need to manage change in the Village with covenants such that the original design intent would be preserved. As deeds were transferred in the 1920's, others added more restrictions that were clearly intended to establish visual harmony. Design topics included limitations on signs, awnings, overhangs, roofing, set-backs, as well as uses. Many of the current guidelines draw upon these precedents.

**THE GUIDELINES THAT FOLLOW  
IN THIS BOOK  
APPLY TO ALL SUB-AREAS,  
AND BOTH REHAB  
AND NEW CONSTRUCTION**